



National Brownfields Assessment Pilot *Oregon Mill Sites*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

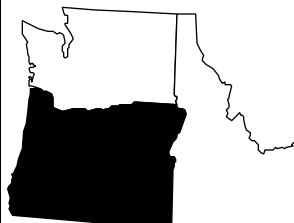
Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA selected the Oregon Economic Development Department for a Brownfields Pilot. The Mill Site Conversion Project, is a public/private partnership created to return seven vacant mill sites in rural communities to productive use. The Rural Development Initiatives, Inc. is the lead organization of the partnership that includes Pacific Corporation, U.S. Bank, and the law firm of Stoel, Rives, Boley, Jones and Grey. In many of these communities, these sites represent the only property zoned for industrial use. To create new jobs, vacant sites must be converted into usable, environmentally and financially viable industrial property. Due to the risk and liability associated with the sites, the mill properties have either been abandoned and condemned by the community for back taxes, or "warehoused" by mill owners. Many sites contain chemicals, transformers, and asbestos which are slowly deteriorating and pose a potential threat to human health, soil, and groundwater. These sites are located in the towns of Astoria, Bandon, Coquille, Klamath Falls, Molalla, Myrtle Creek, Philomoth, Sweet Home, and Tygh Valley and, and cover more than 550 acres.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



State of Oregon

Date of Award:
September 1995

Amount: \$200,000

Site Profile: The Pilot targets nine abandoned mill sites located in Astoria, Bandon, Coquille, Klamath Falls, Molalla, Myrtle Creek, Philomoth, Sweet Home, and Tygh Valley. Collectively, the mill sites cover more than 500 acres.

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Visit the EPA Brownfields Website at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

OBJECTIVES

The Mill Site Conversion Project is working to rehabilitate vacant and abandoned mill sites into productive industrial and commercial properties and enable surrounding communities to recruit, expand, and retain businesses. Ultimately, the project aims to bring new and diverse employment opportunities to rural areas in Oregon.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Formulated a scope of work for review by Rural Development Initiatives, Inc. (RDI)'s mill site advisory committee;
- Begun Phase I and II environmental assessments at seven vacant mill sites; and
- Published the Siteline newsletter to build awareness in the community of the project's progress and activities.

The Pilot is:

- Developing assessment and cleanup approaches, quantifying costs, and evaluating the potential for generic cleanup remedies for the seven mill sites in order to help developers assess their cleanup liability, financing options, and development risks, and to establish cleanup standards for similar abandoned mill sites;
- Creating a computer model to measure the costs and benefits of various cleanup options, and to help guide development of tax incentives and other financial methods for encouraging assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment. The models will help community and regulatory agencies assess the benefits of various financing options while giving property owners and developers a means to evaluate the benefits and relative risks of redevelopment;
- Developing site-specific reuse plans that are consistent with redevelopment opportunities, local economic development strategies, infrastructure needs, environmental and land-use planning requirements, and the goals of developers;

- Coordinating interaction between project stakeholders and partners; and
- Establishing Local Action Committees in affected communities to ensure broad community participation in the brownfield redevelopment process.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Oregon Mills Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following.

- Based on a risk assessment report, the Astoria site has been identified as an opportunity for use of planning funds in cooperation with Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality and ShoreTrust Advisory Services. ShoreTrust Advisory Services loaned the City of Astoria \$700,000 for use in brownfields cleanup.